<u>**Amendments to the Claims**</u>:

Please replace the existing listing of claims with the following:

1.   (currently amended) In a communications system having a <u>gateway</u> <u>containing a</u> group of interface devices <u>each</u> configured with the same functionality for assembling messages transmitted as sequences of data packets from within a coverage area of a wireless communications network, a method for assembling a message from a sequence of data packets, including:

        receiving at one interface device of the group of interface devices from the wireless communications network at least one data packet of a sequence of data packets that collectively form a message;

        determining if the at least one data packet meets a predetermined criteria based on the location of the at least one data packet in the sequence of data packets, and if so <u>claiming ownership of the sequence of data packets by</u> sending out a request to the other interface devices of the group for any data packets of the sequence received by the other interface devices and receiving at the one interface device any data packets sent by the other interface devices in response to the request; and

        assembling the data packets of the sequence into the message at the one interface device.

2.   (original) The method of claim 1 including, prior to sending out the request, determining if the one interface device has received all the data packets of the sequence, wherein the request to the other interface devices is sent out only if a determination is made that the one interface device has not received all the data packets of the sequence.

3.   (original) The method of claim 2 wherein the predetermined criteria is that the at least one data packet is the final data packet in the sequence.

4.   (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the group of interface devices are

distributed computers connected by a wired network across which the request is sent.

5.   (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the request includes an interface device identifier identifying the one interface device and a sequence identifier identifying the sequence.

6.   (original) The method of claim 1 wherein each data packet of the sequence includes information associating the data packet with the message and information indicating a location of the data packet within the sequence, wherein the criteria is based on a location of the at least one data packet within the sequence.

7.   (original) The method of claim 1 including monitoring at the other interface devices of the group for the request and in reply thereto sending to the one interface device any data packets for the sequence received at the other interface devices.

8.   (original) The method of claim 1 including monitoring at the one interface device for a request from any of the other interface devices of the group for data packets of a requested sequence, and sending any data packets of the requested sequence received by the one interface device to a requesting one of the other interface devices of the group.

9.   (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coverage area is a substantially continuous geographic area.

10.   (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coverage area includes a plurality of geographically dispersed areas.

11.   (currently amended) An interface device comprising one of a group of interface devices within a gateway, for receiving messages transmitted as sequences

of data packets from within a coverage area of a wireless communications network, the group of interface devices being coupled to a gateway network for communicating there between, each of the interface devices in the group of interface devices configured with the same functionality, the interface device including a message assembler for determining if the interface device should assemble a message for a sequence of data packets of which the interface device has received at least one data packet, based on whether the interface device has received a data packet having a predetermined location in the sequence of data packets, and if so claiming ownership of the sequence of data packets by sending out a request for any missing data packets to the other interface devices in the group over the gateway network and assembling the message upon receiving the missing data packets.

wherein the message assembler of each interface device determines if the interface device should assemble the message based on whether the interface device has received a data packet having a predetermined location in the sequence of data packets.

12. (previously presented) The interface device of claim 11 wherein each data packet sent over the wireless network is directed to the interface device.

13. (cancelled)

14. (previously presented) The interface device of claim 11 wherein the predetermined location is a last location in the sequence of data packets.

15. (previously presented) The interface device of claim 11 wherein the message assembler of the interface device monitors for a request for missing data packets of a sequence from other interface devices in the group and upon receipt thereof sends over the gateway network to the requesting interface device any missing data packets of the sequence that have been received thereby.

16.   (cancelled)

17.   (previously presented) The interface device of claim 11 wherein the interface device and the other interface devices have a respective dedicated communications channel on the gateway network for communicating requests for missing packets.

18.   (previously presented) The interface device of claim 11 further including a wireless network adaptor associated with the interface device for converting data packets received from the coverage area from a first protocol to a second protocol suitable for the interface device.

19.   (previously presented) The interface device of claim 11 wherein the coverage area is a substantially continuous geographic area.

20.   (previously presented) The interface device of claim 11 wherein the coverage area includes a plurality of geographically dispersed areas.

21.   (currently amended) A communications system comprising a gateway for routing messages between a wireless network and a client network, the gateway including a gateway network and a group of interface devices configured with the same functionality including the interface device according to claim 11.

22.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein each interface device in the group of interface devices operates in the same network layer.

23.   (New) A gateway for routing messages between a wireless packet data network and a client network, the wireless packet data network enabling a mobile device to transmit a message as a sequence of data packets, the gateway comprising:

        a client network interface for communicating with the client network;
        a group of wireless transport interface devices each connected to one or more wireless network adaptors for receiving data packets from the wireless

network and each being configured to assemble data packets into messages; and

a gateway network connecting each of the wireless transport interface devices to the client network interface,

wherein each of the wireless transport interface devices includes a message assembler, the message assembler being configured to determine if a received data packet from a sequence of data packets is the last data packet in the sequence and, if so, claim ownership of the sequence by sending a request to the other wireless transport interface devices in response to which the other wireless transport interface devices reply with any data packets from the sequence that they have received, and wherein the message assembler claiming ownership of a sequence is configured to assemble the message after receiving any data packets from the sequence from the other wireless transponder interface devices.